Abstract No: 434 *Health Sciences*

Assessment of dietary diversity among community dwelling elderly in Kandy district: a pilot study

H. M. Abeywickrama[1*], H.D.W.T. Damayanthi[1] and K.M.S. Wimalasiri[2]

[1]Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, [2]Department of Food Science and Technology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
[*]hansanimadushika87@gmail.com

Diverse diet reflects the overall nutritional quality and nutrient adequacy of the diet. Multiple nutrient deficiencies are more likely to occur with the aging process, especially in populations based on a monotonous cereal based diet. Available scientific evidence has identified Dietary Diversity Score (DDS) and Food Variety Score (FVS) as potentially useful indicators of macro and micronutrient diet adequacy. Hence, the objective of the study was to assess the dietary diversity among the elderly population in Kandy district, Sri Lanka using DDS, FVS and DSS.

This was a pilot study of a cross sectional design. A convenience sample of 60 elderly/ older people aged > 60 years, were randomly selected for the sample. A single 24 hour dietary recall was performed to assess the dietary intake and to compute three dietary scores: Dietary Diversity Score (DDS) and Food Variety Score (FVS) and Dietary Serving Score (DSS). Twelve major food groups were used to calculate DDS based on the local and international food grouping techniques adapting the cultural context. Six food groups were used to compute DSS using the scoring system.

The mean FVS of the study sample was 11.33 (SD 2.6), while the minimum and maximum values were 7 and 20 respectively. The average of the DDS was 7.4 (SD 1.1) within the range of 5-10. All the elders consumed some kind of a cereal and sources of oil/ fat, while 95% consumed sugar/ sweets. Only half of the population consumed green leafy vegetables while fruit consumption was less than 50%. Consumption of animal food was comparatively low; however, meat (10%) and eggs (5%) showed significantly low consumption compared to fish (65%). Mean DSS was 9.8 (SD 1.6). The higher and lower means of DSS was related to cereals/ roots and the fruit group respectively. There are no established cut off points for DDS, FVS and DSS to indicate adequacy of dietary diversity.

In conclusion, all the elders consumed cereals as their major energy source. However, consumption of certain food groups such as fruits and animal products were lower than the recommended servings. Hence, interventions must be taken to improve the diet of the elderly.